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PRESS RELEASE

USAID Investments Expected to Improve Afghan Civil Service

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN – The Afghan Civil Service Commission will be able to provide improved basic government services to the Afghan people following an agreement signed today between the Ministry of Finance and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The agreement recognizes that the satisfactory delivery of basic government services to the Afghan people requires an effective body of civil servants, and seeks to bolster those capacities necessary for expanding the Afghan civil service.

Since USAID started working closely with the Civil Service Commission four years ago, the commission has demonstrated strong planning and budgeting skills and has indicated its willingness to become a more efficient and effective agency in the service of Afghanistan; consequently, USAID has expanded its on-budget assistance to the Civil Service Commission.

The fifteen-month \$15 million grant agreement will bring about reforms within the Civil Service Commission in critical areas of human resources, financial and procurement management, and organizational governance.

"The United States Government made a commitment at the Kabul Conference in July 2010 to channel greater development resources through the Government of Afghanistan," said USAID Mission Director Dr. Ken Yamashita. "We are happy to have the Ministry of Finance and the Civil Service Commission as partners in this endeavor."

This agreement is one of several where USAID is providing support directly to the Government of Afghanistan for development initiatives. In December 2010, USAID submitted a list of more than 25 development assistance programs to the Afghan government. The Ministry of Finance prioritized eight of these programs and convened joint on-budget technical meetings with USAID and relevant line ministries to finalize the projects that were approved by the National Assembly.

In his remarks, Minister of Finance H.E. Mohammad Omar Zakhilwal said, "At the Kabul Conference in 2010, donors and the Government of Afghanistan committed to channel 50 percent of their funding through the national budget and align 80 percent of their funding with the national priority programs. We welcome USAID's commitment to transfer off-budget programs through our national budget." He also noted that it is the responsibility of Government officials to "meet the challenge to increase the government's capacity and prove to our partners that we can deliver basic services to the people of Afghanistan."

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